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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 MEXICO 005528

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SUBJECT: THE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES OF MEXICO'S PRI/LABOR
FEDERAL DEPUTIES

¶1. Summary: Although the 60th session of Mexico,s national congress started work on September 1, 2006, the PRI/labor affiliated representatives to this body have been working together since their election on July 2 to establish a common set of legislative priorities. To some extent, these priorities (listed below) are a laundry list of everything these representatives would like to obtain both from their fellow legislators and the incoming administration of Mexican president-elect Felipe Calderon. Despite the ambitious nature of many of the items on this list, there are some elements (fair treatment of women in the work place, anti-child labor initiatives, etc,) that could develop into fruitful areas of cooperation between the US and Mexico over time. End Summary.

¶2. The 60th session of Mexico,s congress began on September 1, 2006. As is common in the Mexican congress a number of PRI Federal Deputies won office because of their affiliation to the various elements of Mexico,s organized labor movement. Despite the fact that these PRI/Labor Federal Deputies have only recently taken office it appears that they have been working since their election this past July 2 to come up with a list of common legislative priorities. The list was established o/a August 15, but is only just now being shared with the broader leadership of the labor unions that these legislators represent.

¶3. It is not yet clear whether the PRI/Labor Federal Deputies have come up with a strategy to obtain their legislative priorities. However, they do seem to be aware that they will need the support of their fellow legislators if they hope to see their priorities implemented. These legislators also appears to have a sense of urgency in that they want to quickly build support for their priorities so that they can negotiate productively with the incoming administration of Mexican president-elect Felipe Calderon. As the largest party in the Chamber, the PAN, holds only 40% of the seats, it will need to cut deals with the PRI to get its own priorities through, and the PRI/Labor deputies may sense that they are most likely to obtain PAN support for their priorities early in the session.

¶4. The following is a complete list of the PRI/Labor Federal Deputies legislative priorities for the 60 th session of Mexico,s national congress. To some extent the list is a bit of a laundry list of everything these labor-affiliated Federal Deputies would like to obtain for the groups they represent. That said, there are some items on the list below which could prove to be productive areas of cooperation between the US and Mexico.

- Freedom of (labor) association and to organize

- Freedom of all labor movements to elect their own leadership
- Freedom to engage in collective bargaining
- Respect for labor autonomy
- Respect for the right to strike
- A right to housing
- Stable employment with decent wages and benefits
- Compliance with legal guarantees for the fair treatment for women in the workplace
- Eradication of the worst forms of child labor; promote the ratification of ILO Convention 138 concerning the minimum age for employment
- Prevent changes in the authorized workers, benefits in social services agencies
- A right to timely and efficient medical and social security services
- Guarantees of full funding for pension/retirement benefits (with specific prohibitions against government use of these funds for unrelated purposes)
- Ensure that national fiscal reform takes into consideration the just and equitable treatment of the salary and benefits the country,s lowest paid workers
- Obtain tax relief for paid benefits associated

MEXICO 00005528 002 OF 002

with working overtime, productivity and quality incentives, transportation subsidies, etc.

- Integrate the informal sectors of the economy into a system of shared (fiscal/tax) responsibilities
- Training to improve quality control
- Regulate and limit the creation of outsourcing companies that weaken or undercut the rights of workers
- Promote the establishment of a national minimum wage (currently the minimum wage varies from one region to another of Mexico)
- Analyze the effectiveness of, and debate the need for the continued existence of the National Minimum Wage Commission given this organization,s poor record of protecting the salaries of workers
- Establish a clear and easily understand method for informing workers about (deductions for)their retirements savings
- Federalize the (current state system) of Conciliation and Arbitration Councils
- Maintain (for the PRI) the Committee Chairmanship of the Chamber of Deputies, "Work Commission"
- Guarantee the fair treatment of agricultural workers that have emigrated to the US through the establishment of treaties or conventions stabilize rights and salaries of such employees; advance laws that promote job creation in Mexico.

following PRI/Labor Federal Deputies:

Dip. Prof. Patricio Flores Sandoval
Dip. Diego Aguilar Acuna
Dip. Joel Ayala Almeida
Dip. Jesus Ramirez Stabros
Dip. Lic. Juan Carlos Velasco Perez
Dip. Ing. Ricardo Aldana Prieto
Dip. Alfredo Barba Hernandez

¶16. Comment: The PRI/Labor legislative priorities are obviously the creation of only one of the eight political parties represented in the Mexican Congress, albeit in this Congress, the PRI faction is likely to play a pivotal role, given the likely unwillingness of the PRD to cooperate with the PAN on many issues. To post,s knowledge these priorities have not yet been passed to other political parties for their comment or reaction. Some items on the list may well prove unacceptable to Mexico,s other political parties.

¶17. That said, there are areas where the US may be able to cooperate with Mexico,s congress to promote legal reform that would be mutually beneficial to both countries. Items such as freedom of association, compliance with law providing for the fair treatment of women in the workplace, the ratification of ILO Convention 138 and efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor are areas where the US is already playing a leading role internationally. We will need to see how Mexican congressional politics develop over the next few months, but we may have a good opportunity to promote these priorities as well in our bilateral relations with Mexico.

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